

THE #ONECLS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL

We have been charged by our Access to Justice and CLS Boards to transform our advocacy to align ourselves with movement lawyering though community-led advocacy. Consequently, we have created this document to be a guidepost for one way we can fulfill this charge. We are mindful that this is not the only way to engage with community.

Community accountability* and relationship building are essential to fulfilling our mission and achieving our vision. At CLS, we are shifting our work and focus to stand in solidarity with our black and brown communities, and those who are oppressed by inequities and injustice within the immigration and criminal legal systems. Our organization has a long history of working on behalf of these populations. As we continue to implement and evaluate our structure, we are also shifting our strategy from working on behalf of these populations, to working with and in service to the efforts of impacted communities.

Our #OneCLS Model is not exclusive to anyone and is intended to encompass every facet of #OneCLS. Our community-driven approach is essential to not only our advocacy, but also our internal operations, our vendor selections, fundraising, our board and funders. We have made great strides in these efforts and our community engagement model is only the beginning to what is to come.

We are applying community-centered thinking to our hiring practices, staffing, training and professional development, media strategy and our newly established development department and this document lays the framework for us to build on as we move forward and adapt. The #OneCLS Community Engagement document is intended to be guidance for our organization as we center community, clarify the role of community engagement in our advocacy and operations, and how the Advocacy and Community Engagement Specialists (ACES) steward these efforts.

To establish collective understanding, we have defined the terms community, community partners, community-driven and accountability for CLS. Our #OneCLS <u>Values</u>, <u>Agreements</u> and the <u>Anti-Racist Principles</u> as outlined by <u>The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond</u> are at the foundation of our community engagement.

Definitions for CLS

Community

Community is defined as those affected by the systems that cause and perpetuate mass incarceration and inequities facing our immigrant populations with emphasis on people of color. Those who are incarcerated, and people who are undocumented tend to be the furthest from democracy and face barriers in trying to exercise and fulfill their basic human rights.

Generally, these are individuals and groups that come together outside of their professional responsibilities to organize around a set of principles, beliefs, concerns, or long-term goals. While there are people who organize within their professional capacity, they are not included in this definition. Community is not our only source of reference or accountability; however, it is our intent to center community as we engage in our advocacy based on our commitment to equity and justice.

Community Partners

Community partners include the collection of individuals and groups as defined above whose identified priorities have some alignment, fully or in part, with CLS's strategic priorities and with whom CLS has established a collaborative and accountable relationship. For example, Washington Immigrant Solidarity



Network (WAISN), Familias Unidas por la Justicia (FUJ), La Resistencia, Village of Hope, and Black Prisoners' Caucus (BPC) are classified as Community Partners.

Community partners should be representative of our client populations and have or be open to focusing on racial equity, be a part of a broader social justice movement and have priorities that intersect with our strategic priorities.

Our definitions are intentionally broad. Narrowing our definition could box us into a certain type of organization making us less nimble. Each community partner is unique and the relationship we develop, the role CLS plays, and the partnership will vary.

We will continue to work and collaborate with our non-community partner organizations in the Alliance for Equal Justice, but these organizations do not fall within the definition of community partners. You can find a list of our partners organizations at the Alliance for Equal Justice website.

Community-Driven

The Equity and Community Engagement Director and the Community Engagement Team (CET)S collectively work with each office and individual advocacy projects to identify existing and potential community partners and develop a strategy specific to the needs of the region to ensure that it aligns with the broader CLS community engagement strategy.

Through intense active listening and participation, education, and exchange of information, CLS will identify trends, concerns, potential legal claims and strategies, and requests as a part of these groups. The specific way we engage with each community group will depend largely on our relationship and that group's stated needs.

Our organizational strategy is community informed while our advocacy is community driven, meaning the efforts and organizing of the community around a particular issue are led and organized by the community where possible. If community is not or cannot organize, we will support their effort.

- Community partner voices are essential in all CLS advocacy.
- > CLS is a small part of broader advocacy movement. We work in partnership.
- We are experts on the system and those most impacted are experts on their conditions and experience.
- ➤ The focus of our partnership is relational and not transactional.
- CLS has an anti-racist approach to systemic change.

Community asks and requests are essential to our advocacy. Being community-driven requires us to listen and support existing movements, expressions, and assertion of rights and liberties and assist in exploring potential resolution.

Community, as defined above, helps guide our advocacy. Through our established relationships community and our community partners request assistance, identify needs, or we inform them of an issue for the purpose of receiving feedback. Our role is to ensure that if the requests align with our strategic priorities, and we have the capacity, we prioritize those requests.

Accountability

Our community engagement is a part of how #OneCLS is accountable to our community and community partners and those who are most affected by mass incarceration and inequities in the immigration system. We work to ensure that our advocacy and strategy are in alignment with our community and community partners.



- Accountability looks like making decisions with community and affected parties in mind, communicate those decisions back to community and community partners; and incorporating relevant feedback. It is working to create, plan, and implement a collective strategy.
- Regular attendance at meetings and events, ongoing communication, and updates are essential. Accountability looks like reciprocity, clear and open communication, and a willingness to be corrected/redirected by our community and community partners.
- > Occasional discomfort is expected as part of building accountable relationships. Humility and self-awareness will help navigate these spaces.

Identifying community asks: How do we filter community requests?

For efficiency, community requests can be thought of in three categories: **immediate** *no and refer, clarify, or take it to the table.* Filtering requests can help streamline the community ask process. This work is different in purpose from traditional intake processing. Community asks should be evaluated, and a recommendation rendered by the receiving advocate.

When an advocate receives a request, they should be listening to determine if the requests are feasible and align with the scope of our strategic focus. Requests that are denied at the table should be referred to 211, CLEAR or elsewhere, if there is an appropriate referral available. We have created the filter below to guide our analysis on how asks are brought to the EMI and PIE table level and what things can be referred out.

<u>What qualifies as an immediate no?</u> With an immediate no, it is clear that the request is outside of the scope of our area of expertise, strategic priority, or capacity. How this information is presented to the community partner should be thought through and the feedback should be presented by the receiving advocate. Examples of a no are:

- Requests for individual advocacy that does not have systemic impact such as personal criminal, civil or family cases.
- ➤ Requests to endorse/help campaign for political parties/candidates
- Requests that fall into specialties of partner organizations (ex. Immigration representation, family law, worker's compensation, disability related needs/services)
- Requests that fall outside of priority areas and are not in furtherance of racial equity

<u>When should I ask for clarification?</u> Requests for clarification may mean there is some ambiguity in the request. A request should be brought to the table and/or CET if you are unsure or require clarity of any of the following: If you feel like the requests may have some ambiguity on whether it fits into our areas of expertise or strategic alignment

- > If you are having trouble clarifying the request or setting expectations
- Can be brought to the CET if you need help preparing for the larger EMI and PIE table meeting

When the community request is agreed upon at the table level, it has likely met the following:

- Ask originated from a group composed of and led predominately by client populations Asks are specific and utilize the tools of CLS.
- The ask is specific in identifying what the community group is asking for so we can assess how and if we can help.
- Asks are in furtherance of racial equity, undoing institutional racism and/or anti-racism



- > The ask directly or indirectly reduces the negative impacts of mass incarceration and immigration on people of color.
- > There may be a need to process with the larger table to gain additional clarity on an ask.

In determining whether we should take on a community ask; we utilize the RAPID decision-making model with the following roles.

Recommend – Advocate who received the request Allow – Director of Advocacy / Controller Performer – Staff who is assigned to the project Input – Table Decider – DDA/ADDA

Community Partner Sponsorship Vetting

In support of community and our partners, we have established a process by which we can consider requests for sponsorship. The CET performs an evaluation of the request after it is considered at the table. For example, if Advocate A receives a request from Community Group X, A should take the sponsorship request to the corresponding table for discussion. If agreed upon at the table level, it is sent to the CET to be considered through the Sponsorship vetting process. For more details, please see our Community Sponsorship Vetting document.

ACES and the Community Engagement Team (CET)

The Community Worker role has had several iterations at CLS over the last 10 years. The first was a distinct role where several individuals were employed specifically for the function of Community Worker.

The more recent iteration of community worker has been carried out through the duties and needs identified within other roles, including Attorneys, Policy Analyst and Paralegal/Legal Assistant positions. In these cases, CLS has developed substantive knowledge and deeper investment in the work. The #OneCLS Community Engagement model is created with the following goals in mind:

- Prioritize community engagement and relationship building
- More advocates available to rotate outreach efforts
- Navigate power, privilege, and access without gatekeeping
- > Intentional and accountable to the community Clear line of communication
- > Established and maintained accountable relationships

Based on the information above, along with feedback from staff, the Community Engagement (CET) Model Committee created a job description and narrative that will guide the duties and responsibilities of the ACES. By creating clear roles and connecting the ACES to advocacy, we are providing structural and supervisory support.

Internal ACES Connection and Role Clarity

VISION: The Advocacy Team, through anti-racist collaboration and transparency, will work to provide community informed and driven advocacy. Our vision is that everyone is involved in our community engagement. ACES are intended to help drive and steward our community engagement efforts, manage relationships, and act as a liaison to connect other advocates to those relationships.

Relationship sharing is key in the #OneCLS Community Engagement model. Attorneys, ACES, legal assistants and paralegals work together to share and maintain existing relationships. All advocates are expected to participate in outreach and community engagement and should feel empowered to attend

*This document is intended for internal purposes.



community meetings and events at their discretion. No one is expected to end or transfer existing relationships to ACES. Doing so can reinforce silos and make our engagement overly dependent on one person. Instead, introductions and sharing of those relationships retains the authenticity of existing relations while creating new ones.

Community engagement requires collective effort. Requests from community vary and we may be asked to participate in community-led activities. All staff should expect to be requested to participate. To institutionalize a community engagement culture at CLS, it is encouraged that staff participate if capacity permits. Some examples include:

- Request for trainings (Intake, legal aid 101, legislative trainings)
- > Tabling events or clinics at a community function
- Media consultation
- Strategy meetings with community partners
- Advocacy updates
- Community/Joint Press Conference support

Invites and/or flyers for community events with any available details should be shared with ACES with any available details to help staff and track organization-wide attendance in community spaces. When strategizing around community engagement for a project, Teams should work with ACES to identify community partners we want to connect with and keep identified groups connected to our advocacy. Keep in mind that not every community meeting/event will/needs to be staffed. If an attorney, legal assistant or paralegal plans to attend a meeting, they should share that information with ACES for tracking purposes.

Connection with Advocacy

ACES function as a part of the Community Engagement Team (CET) and as a part of individual advocacy projects/cases. The ACT will assign work to ACES on discrete pieces of advocacy that have been identified and agreed upon at the table level. ACES roles on the advocacy team will vary depending on the needs of the project.

In the event of an emergency request that cannot be discussed at a table meeting due to time sensitivity or deadlines, requests should be directed to the Director of Equity and Community Engagement and the relevant DDA for discussion and consideration. If there is no clear table for the matter, then include the Advocacy Director or the ACT.

When an advocate is requesting an ACES to assist with an investigation for advocacy that does not yet rise to the level of table discussion (i.e. court observation, interviewing witnesses), the advocate shall contact the Equity and Community Engagement Director/ACES to determine if the ACES has capacity to participate in the advocacy. ACES will also work with local staff to meet the engagement needs of the office and region.

ACES participation in Table Meetings

Community work should be integrated into every facet of advocacy. All ACES will attend the Ending Mass Incarceration and Promoting Immigrant Equity table meetings and will conduct community engagement for both focus areas. ACES attend table meetings to provide updates on pressing issues and community requests/asks from community and community partners to the corresponding table.

Within table meetings, ACES participate in systems thinking and racial equity analysis to ensure that community perspectives are included in determining program alignment as it relates to advocacy.

When there are community asks that are brought to the table, the ACES or receiving advocate should have reviewed and analyzed the request and be prepared to give a recommendation as to why the table *This document is intended for internal purposes.



should or should not approve the ask. For example, if the community group asks us to sign on to a letter, the receiving advocate should review the request, provide background on the partner, and provide a recommendation based on the analysis. The advocate may bring the request to the CET meeting for assistance in analyzing the request.

Community Engagement Team

ACES function as a part of the CET. CET meetings are open to anyone who is interested in attending. **The CET meets every Monday at 3:00p.** A calendar invite for the scheduled meetings is available to all staff. If you are interested, please contact the Equity and Community Engagement Director. The purpose of these meetings is to:

- Align our outreach efforts.
- > Strategize around our community engagement.
- ➤ Have a deeper discussion regarding our partners and the nuances associated with existing and protentional relationships.
- Discuss updates on community meetings we have attended and preview upcoming community partner meetings.
- Process who should be involved on specific advocacy project or key partners to create an advocacy campaign.

How do I partner with ACES?

ACES roles on an advocacy team vary depending on the needs of the project/case. The role for ACES internally is to support the creation and advancement of advocacy and ensure that our work is rooted in community accountability.

ACES duties likely fall in one of the following areas: *Litigation, Policy, Strategic Outreach, and Advocacy Support*. The duties below are intended for community support and should only be applied as a part of pre-existing community efforts. These duties are also not exclusive to ACES and are intended to frame possible duties, but not limit them explicitly to, ACES.

<u>Litigation</u> – Keeping in mind that litigation involves a relationship primarily between attorney and client, ACES may be assigned to perform investigative duties to include fact gathering, identifying clients and conducting initial interviews along with client communication, relationship management, and connecting clients with community partners when appropriate. The ACES may also be asked to provide litigation support by way of drafting/collecting declarations on assigned cases as a secondary resource but should take into account the differences between the ACES role and other members on the team. With direction from team lead or attending attorney, ACES duties can include:

- Investigations/Interviews
- Fact finding
- Client and family communication
- Court Observation
- Media and talking points
- Connecting and reporting our advocacy back to community partners

<u>Policy</u> – May include responding to community requests regarding policy, liaising between community, the legislature and CLS. May track bills and keep communities abreast of potential legislation, draft and/or edit community-led bills, and work with community members to identify policy priorities. ACES can also work with community to create talking points and educate



the legislature on potential bills. Work to secure sponsorship and support for community-led bills. May draft and/or provide analysis of potential bills in support of community efforts.

- Media and talking points
- > Convening and attending coalition meetings related to assigned cases
- Connecting policy project to community
- > Support community efforts to introduce bills

Note: Non-community centered workgroups are less aligned with our community engagement and are therefore attended by ACES in support of community partners..

<u>Strategic Outreach</u> – Provide community education and/or updates on CLS' work and items that may intersect with the priorities of community groups. Attend community events, town halls, and represent CLS as available. Establish and maintain meaningful relationships with community and community partners. Contribute to case/advocacy strategy internally and externally. Work with community to provide organizational perspective and insight. Collaborate with community to identify discrete areas CLS can lend its expertise as a part of a broader movement.

- Community Education
- Mapping Community Groups and associated issues and requests to track reoccurring issues
- Identify gaps in our engagement based on our strategic priorities
- Communications support
- Issue spotting
- Convening (community groups with legal aid, legislature and anyone with power CLS has access to)

General Advocacy Support

- Campaign development
- Media and talking points
- Connecting community with internal CLS advocacy
- Issue mapping (track and map issues as they arise)
- Identify gaps in engagement and advocacy
- Data collection/community surveys
- Video production

Community Partnerships

Each ACES will be assigned several community groups and partners. They are responsible for managing the relationship and ensuring regular contact with assigned community and partners. Other advocates should be involved in the relationship and this assignment is not intended to limit who engages with community or community partner, but rather institutionalizes the prioritization of the community and/or partner by having someone assigned to ensure ongoing contact and minimize transactional relationships. Advocates should touch base with the assigned ACES or the CET when considering partnership on advocacy for tracking purposes.

Who covers what area for outreach?

We currently have 3 ACES. The distribution of the efforts will be as follows:

- ACES cover a 140-mile radius (2-hour drive) to meet new or existing partners but may be asked to travel beyond based on the needs of the program.
- Yakima, *Kennewick and Wenatchee based ACES cover southeastern and south-central Washington



- > Seattle based ACES cover northwestern Washington
- Olympia based ACES will cover southwestern Washington
- Eastern and North central Washington are covered by all ACES depending on capacity and availability.

Engagement Requests: How do we request ACES to engage a community partner?

We want to track our community engagement for funding purposes. If you attend a community meeting or event, or are planning to do so, it is ideal that the meeting or event and date be emailed to the ACES email group, mentioned at the table meeting or brought to the CET for tracking purposes. If there is something you would like to unpack or discuss at the CET meeting, please submit the request in writing along with some general background on the topic to the CET email group.

Issues that are submitted by COB the Wednesday prior to the next CET meeting will be given priority. In the event of an emergency request due to time sensitivity or deadlines, requests can be directed to the CET and/or Director of Equity and Community Engagement for immediate discussion and consideration.



#OneCLS Community Engagement Continuum

The #OneCLS Community Engagement Continuum is comprised of two levels of engagement, Relationship Building (Phases I and II) and Advocacy (Phase III and IV). This document is not meant to be linear but instead is a guided continuum to classify basic community engagement. The placement of any partnership on this continuum depends on the nature of our relationship with the community partner.

The 4 phases of the #OneCLS Community Engagement Continuum are designed to address and support efforts to de-silo legal aid and community advocacy efforts and highlight the racial and economic disparities related to mass incarceration and immigrant inequity. The phases of the model indicate levels of engagement and are suggested guides on how to collaboratively address the economic and racial determinants that are blockading immigrant equity and de-carceration. The #OneCLS community engagement continuum prioritizes relationships and long-term goals over productivity and quick results. This allows for us to build transparent, healthy, and accountable relationships.

Relationship Building

Phases I and II – These are introductory yet foundational to establish and maintain a long-term accountable relationship. The success of our advocacy is heavily based on the strength of our community partnerships. Consequently, the vast majority of our time and effort will be spent in Phase I and II as this is where trust, accountability and consistency are established. These components are what will drive the relationship and can determine the health, effectiveness and longevity of a partnership.

Advocacy

Phases III and IV - These phases are where advocacy and collaborative organizing happen. Either we have been asked to do work or we have collegially developed advocacy with community. Our work is optimized when the community partner and CLS are both involved. It is here that our advocacy is driven by our community partners and we use our specialized tools to help achieve the desired results while creating opportunities to shift power. It is possible to start a relationship in Phase III and IV and not have spent time in Phase I or II. In these cases, it is the responsibility of CLS, particularly the assigned advocates and the CET to ensure that the work highlighted in the first two phases is accomplished.

The following are paramount in both building and maintaining accountable relationships:

- ➤ Authenticity Show up fully as your whole self
- Transparency Relevant information in a manner that is digestible
- ➤ Recognize Diversity of thought
- > Inclusive Participation Opportunity to contribute to and influence outcomes that will directly affect their lives
- ➤ Equity Encourage open discussion and all ideas are treated with respect even when it seems unreasonable from a legal/strategic perspective
- Cooperation Attend meetings and events when possible. If hosting an event, schedule at times
 and places that are comfortable for community
- Responsiveness Be diligent and responsive to concerns and complaints even if it's outside of our priorities. Provide feedback, make a referral and follow up, and provide feedback on projects



> Influence – Outcomes should shift power, end a bad practice or influence policy making and decisions, build relationships



The #OneCLS Community Engagement Continuum





Community Engagement Model Phases*	Education, Events and Meetings: Phase I: Decide to work with a Community, Identify Needs & Opportunities, & Community Outreach	Accountable Relationships Phase II: Establish Accountable Relationships w/ Community Groups and Leaders & Connect and Engage w/ Community and People	Community Asks Phase III: Community Asks, Investigation & Support	Advocacy Phase IV: Advocacy & Collaborating with Community
Description	 Process of becoming familiar with a community group or individual. A community member/group reaches out to CLS for assistance or consultation. 	 A community group has expressed interest in connecting with CLS and meets community partner criteria (community led, anti-racist lens, able/willing to organize as a part of a broader movement, impacted persons led, POC led, etc.). CLS connects w/ communities on an ongoing basis and as a member/part of the community group. 	Through existing relationships, a group/individual has a specific request to perform a duty that aligns/connects to CLS' mission/values and strategic priorities.	Through our existing community relationships and ongoing discussion, a specific discrete piece of advocacy sparks from a community ask and/or investigation or is connected to an existing movement.
Our Role & Function	 Attend Community hosted events, regularly scheduled meetings, or requests for exchange of information/ educational opportunities. Communicate CLS' mission, vision, and strategic priorities. 	 Establish boundaries, set and manage expectations. Provide updates/education on issues and seek input from community regarding new, potential and existing projects, issues or policy. Reiterate CLS' mission, vision, and strategic priorities. 	 Be upfront and realistic about CLS ability to fulfill request. Timely consider community ask and give priority to community partners. Debrief at appropriate table meeting for input and agreement. ACT will staff, if approved. 	 Convene community groups with our stakeholders and legislators. Strategize as a part of the coalition taking the direction of those most affected by the issues (community). Reiterate CLS' strategic priorities.
Goal	Meet and connect with people outside our normal contact, collect contact information, and become aware of specific community issues/concerns.	 Build and establish meaningful and accountable relationships. Maintain clear lines of communication and flow of information. 	Support community efforts, capacity building and/or advancing the mission and vision of a community, group or movement.	 Produce targeted systemic advocacy that engages and is inclusive of community efforts. Minimize collateral damage by conduction in community-driven and informed advocacy.



Orking for Justice Sinc	e 1967
-------------------------	--------

Community Engagement Model Phases*	Education, Events and Meetings: Phase I: Decide to work with a Community, Identify Needs & Opportunities, & Community Outreach	Accountable Relationships Phase II: Establish Accountable Relationships w/ Community Groups and Leaders & Connect and Engage w/ Community and People	Community Asks Phase III: Community Asks, Investigation & Support	Advocacy Phase IV: Advocacy & Collaborating with Community
	Build relationships with meeting hosts and identify spaces that local organizers frequent (churches, corner stores, hair salon/barber shops, restaurants, fairs etc.), or help establish/identify such a place.	 Serve as a check and balance/advisor for the work of CLS to provide informed advocacy. Build capacity and minimize unproductive gatekeeping and desilo legal aid efforts. Apply a collective vision that benefits community. Shift/balance power within our relationship and leverage our access. 	 Further build trust and consistency to strengthen the relationship. Resolve any issues, concerns that may be connected to the issues. Provide support/aid and educational opportunity to minimize dependence on CLS in the future. Establish equitable reciprocity 	Contribute skills as a part of movement/ campaign/strategy.
Examples	 Tabling Events. Speaking/presentations. Attending regularly scheduled meetings (monthly, quarterly, weekly). 	 Attend regularly scheduled meetings. Share updates of existing project. Communicate new issues we hear about and request feedback. Become a member of a community group as an individual and organization. Outline CLS' capacity and boundaries. 	 Request for assistance in drafting a DOC policy proposal. Participate in a legal clinic. Request to investigate conditions of confinement or violation of rights of an incarcerated person. CLS staff hears a repeated complaint about voter rights suppression. 	After investigating concerns at a Juvenile Rehabilitation facility at the request of community partners, we discover significant issues. As a result, we file a lawsuit or propose legislation that will make systemic change.
Characteristics		 Relationships with community groups and leaders are: Less static; Centering the engaged party; Actively maintained; Prioritized (requests, feedback, etc.); and 	 Identified patterns. An exchange of an ask from community or CLS and an acceptance/affirmative response to requesting party. 	 Constant check-ins with community and collecting feedback and direction. Potentially attached to a broader movement, i.e. ending mass incarceration or immigrant freedom.



Community Engagement Model Phases*	Education, Events and Meetings: Phase I: Decide to work with a Community, Identify Needs & Opportunities, & Community Outreach	Accountable Relationships Phase II: Establish Accountable Relationships w/ Community Groups and Leaders & Connect and Engage w/ Community and People	Community Asks Phase III: Community Asks, Investigation & Support	Advocacy Phase IV: Advocacy & Collaborating with Community
		 Trusted and consistent. 	Collegial effort that potentially includes community, stakeholder partners and CLS staff.	

^{*}Depending on the existing relationships with the community partner or organization, it is possible to begin at Phase II or III before moving on to Phase IV.

*This document is intended for internal purposes.